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# Interview with candidates for Rector of CU

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Who will be the 508th rector of Charles University? We could find the answer to that as early as the end of October, when the CU Academic Senate will elect one of the candidates to the position of rector of the oldest university in central Europe. There are three candidates for the position – current Dean of the CU Faculty of Arts [docent Michal Stehlík](#), CU Prorector for Development [Professor Stanislav Štech](#) and former dean, and current Vice Dean for External Relations and Development of the 1<sup>st</sup> Medical Faculty, [Professor Tomáš Zima](#). The iForum university magazine brings you an interview with all three candidates.



- **If you could change history, which decision from CU history would you re-evaluate?**

**Michal Stehlík:**

As a historian, I'm a little cautious about 'changing history', but so be it. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was certainly a painful period for the university, with much ideological interference in its running, including the expulsion of students and pedagogues. If I could go further back, however, then I would go back to 1409 and the Decree of Kutná Hora, which triggered the departure of

**Stanislav Štech:**

I would be very interested, for example, in how Charles' *studium* would have developed had the Decree of Kutná Hora not been issued, resulting in the departure of many excellent masters and students to Leipzig and elsewhere. Would it have become a jewel such as Bologna or Paris? We can similarly consider the split of the Charles-Ferdinand

**Tomáš Zima:**

It is not good to change history and interpret it differently. I am of the view that past decisions were taken in good faith and for the good of the university. The clock cannot be turned back, history cannot be repeated and all events must be seen in the context of their time and the conditions in place at the university and in society.

many prominent persons, resulting in the weakening and parochialisation of our alma mater.	University into a Czech and a German university in 1882. How would things be had everyone worked together more closely, what would the outcome be?
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• **Please name the three things that you feel currently represent the greatest barrier to the development of CU?**

<p><b>Michal Stehlík:</b> One major barrier is the attitude of the state to education and the inadequate level of support it gives. This is also related to the permanent efforts to 'reform' the pedagogical environment – with the sole result being a massive amount of energy expended in opposing these plans. One barrier that we ourselves put in place is, perhaps, the lack of togetherness between faculties. I see the main cause of this as the imperfect level of communication and provision of information within the university.</p>	<p><b>Stanislav Štech:</b> 1. Financing (inadequate growth in spending on higher education from the state budget compared to the average for OECD countries; absence of more resources from ESF for Prague; asymmetrical income from department to department). 2. The growing bureaucracy and administrative demands of life at CU. Energy that should be devoted to one's own work is increasingly consumed with preparation, reports and controls. 3. Lack of openness: participation in public debates; poor work with graduates; international 'political/educational' activities etc.</p>	<p><b>Tomáš Zima:</b> Current barriers to the development of CU are the inadequate financing of educational, scientific and creative activities and the frequently needlessly bureaucratic system in place in science and research, which cannot distinguish between work to be done by a researcher and by professional administrators. A further problem is the high number of students, frequently at the expense of quality of teaching. Inadequate communication with society can also be a certain barrier. We must constantly explain why education is one of the most important human values.</p>
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• **The current slogan of CU is *Charles University is yours as well!* What should it be in ten years' time?**

<p><b>Michal Stehlík:</b> Some things don't need to be changed no matter what. In ten years' time it will be enough for us to truly fulfil this slogan.</p>	<p><b>Stanislav Štech:</b> I hope that, by that time, CU will not need any advertising slogans because the public will see in CU a guarantee of quality.</p>	<p><b>Tomáš Zima:</b> I must say that I have encountered this slogan only rarely. And I would add: not only yours, but ours! Open, friendly and prestigious..</p>
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• **Which foreign university should CU try to emulate?**

<p><b>Michal Stehlík:</b> With the diversity of our university, I couldn't nominate one single institution. We could emulate every quality institution in some respect. From Vienna we could take inspiration from their campus, right in the heart of the city, from Leuven the emphasis on individual work with postgraduate students, from Stanford or Toronto the emphasis on science. At the end of the day, though, we ourselves should aspire to be of such high quality that others strive to emulate us.</p>	<p><b>Stanislav Štech:</b> With its profile, from theology via the social sciences, medicine and pharmaceutical, scientific and mathematics and physics, Charles University is unique and it would be difficult to find one similar that could serve as a model. Say the University of Leuven. Let us rather seek inspiration in a number of high-quality universities in individual fields, while keeping in mind the conditions under which they operate.</p>	<p><b>Tomáš Zima:</b> There are many universities in the world that can serve as an example to ours. Certainly there are the well-known universities – Oxford, Stanford, Harvard, Heidelberg, King's College. The level of individual fields varies from university to university, so, in view of the wide spectrum of study and scientific fields cultivated at our university, it would be appropriate for each of these fields to each choose a leading institution abroad whose quality they wish to emulate in the future.</p>
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All information on the rules and procedure for the election of the CU Rector can be found [HERE](#) . The CVs and manifestos of registered candidates can be found [HERE](#) .